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**UN DPI:7/94Decolinization Hearing**

Special Committee on decolonization GA/COL/2929
14 July 1994
1437th Meeting (AM)

MOROCCO STALLING PEACE PROCESS IN WESTERN SAHARA, SAYS POLISARIO REPRESENTATIVE
Special Committee on Decolonization Hears Petitioners on Puerto Rico; Concludes Discussion on East Timor

The peace process in Western Sahara had been stalled by Morocco, the occupying Power, a representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) told the Special Committee on decolonization this morning. The self-determination referendum was to have been free of any military or administrative coercion, he said, nevertheless, Morocco had managed to impose on the United Nations the right to keep 65,000 troops, its police and tens of thousands of settlers in that Territory.

Overall, the Moroccan presence during the referendum would be in the range of half a million people, while the Saharaoui population entitled to vote was estimated at some 80,000 people. Such conditions were not ideal for a referendum, he said.

The Special Committee concluded its deliberations on Western Sahara and East Timor. It took note of the reservations expressed by the representative of Indonesia who stated that the appropriate forum for seeking an internationally acceptable solution on East Timor was the ongoing dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. He also told the Committee that some unauthorized security personnel who had recently disrupted a Catholic procession in Dili, East Timor, had been placed in custody pending trial. The military commander there had apologized for the incident, he added.

He was speaking in response to the representative of Portugal who said that three Timorese had been killed and 20 wounded in an altercation between the Indonesian military and Catholic devotees in East Timor in the last few hours. The Portuguese representative also condemned the Indonesian military's disrespect for Catholics in East Timor and said that his country fully supported the Territory's decolonization.

The representative of the Philippines also made a statement on the question of East Timor.

The Committee began its consideration of the situation of Puerto Rico, hearing petitioners on that subject. They were from the Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, Justice for Puerto Rico, and the National Lawyers Guild.

The Committee will meet at 3 p.m. today to continue hearing petitioners on Puerto Rico.

Committee Work Programme

The Special Committee on decolonization met this morning to take up the questions of Western Sahara and to continue hearings on the situation in East Timor. It was also expected to consider the situation in Puerto Rico and 10 small Non-Self-Governing Territories: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

(For details on documents before the Committee on East Timor see Press Release GA/COL/2927 of 13 July, and for those on the 10 Territories see Press Release GA/COL/2923 of 11 July.)

The Committee also has before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat on Western Sahara (document A/AC.109/1194), which reviews actions taken by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General on the matter and summarizes recent political developments.

Question of East Timor

RUI QUARTIN SANTOS (Portugal) said that during the last few hours, 3 Timorese had been killed and 20 had been wounded during an altercation between the Indonesian military and Catholic devotees in the Territory. The Catholics had been held in the University of Dili. The problem had been solved through negotiations mediated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He condemned the Indonesian military's disrespect of the rights of Catholics in East Timor. "It is an intolerable abuse towards the religion of most Timorese", he said.

Mr. Santos said his country, as an administering Power of the Territory, had been unable to perform its duties due to Indonesia's "illegal" take-over of East Timor. His country fully supported the decolonization of East Timor, he emphasized.

He called attention to the human rights violations in that Territory. Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch had still not been able to visit the Territory. Also, the population there had been strongly dissuaded from speaking to foreign visitors. The Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions had just visited the Territory and would soon present a report on the human rights situation there.

Indonesian authorities had failed to provide sufficient information about the fate and identity of those killed and of the overwhelming majority of those still unaccounted for after the Santa Cruz killings. The military and police personnel responsible for the Santa Cruz event had not yet been brought to justice. Also, those convicted for non-violent activities had not been released. In addition, five young East Timorese who had demonstrated peacefully during a visit of foreign journalists to Dili in April had been arrested and recently sentenced. Furthermore, lawyers from the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute had been prevented from meeting "Xanana" Gusmao, the East Timorese leader who had been imprisoned for 20 years. Only a few days ago his wife and children been allowed to visit him, he added.

RONALD B. ALLAREY (Philippines) said his Government had banned the entry of some non-Filipinos to the country and because it feared they intended to use the country as a platform and venue for political statements or activities against a friendly neighbouring country. A report contained in a Secretariat working paper alleging that all non-Filipinos had been barred from entering his country to attend a conference, was untrue. He had hoped that the Secretariat would have been more thorough in its research and not merely relied on a newspaper report to make such an allegation. It would be more accurate if the paper was amended to show that some non-Filipinos had been allowed into the country to attend the conference.

MAX RAI (Papua New Guinea) said that there were two views on the matter of East Timor: one seeking integration and the other wanting independence. Many of the petitioners had been parliamentary members from Europe and some non-governmental organizations. The motives of some of those organizations could be questioned. It could not be presumed that all such entities were really speaking for the people of East Timor.

He said he wondered if the Special Committee on decolonization was the right forum for petitioners to raise the issue of alleged human rights abuses. He urged members of the Committee to focus on the issue of East Timor.

ABDUL NASIER (Indonesia) said that the appropriate and only forum to seek an internationally acceptable solution to the situation in East Timor was the ongoing tripartite dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. At a 17 September 1993 meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia, a series of confidence-building measures were agreed to, including the need to create a favourable and non-confrontational atmosphere, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Indonesia had continued to provide access by foreign representatives, parliamentary missions, journalists and others to East Timor . Many international humanitarian organizations were also operating in East Timor. Some quarters continued to foster the myth of a large Indonesian military presence on the island. Since public order had improved in East Timor, the military command there had been downgraded to a regular district command, as in any other province of Indonesia.

Since the incident of 12 November 1991, the Indonesian Government had made every effort to continue searching for missing persons, but with limited success. It had kept the Secretary-General apprised of the investigations. The number of those unaccounted for had been reduced to 56.

There was complete freedom of cultural expression in East Timor. Indonesia was committed to preserving Portugese relics there. A number of Catholic churches had been renovated and restored by the East Timor Administration. As part of a family reunion programme, 59 East Timorese had been permitted to leave for Portugal.

In East Timor, the process of decolonization had been tumultuous due to the hasty departure of the colonial Power and the attempt by a minority party to seize power by force. But four other political parties, representing the majority of the population, had desired integration with Indonesia. In the 18 years since integration with Indonesia, the people of East Timor had made substantial progress in all aspects of life.

The religious procession in Dili that was disrupted recently was disturbed by unauthorized security personnel. The Government had taken prompt steps to address the situation and the military commander in East Timor had expressed regret and had apologized. The personnel involved had been placed in custody pending their trials.

RUI QUARTIN SANTOS (Portugal) said Indonesia wanted to blame his country for the problems taking place in East Timor. However, his country had already paid its share and allegations that Portugal had abandoned the Territory were unfounded. Portugal had done everything possible to improve the conditions of the Timorese, he emphasized.

ABDUL NASIER (Indonesia) asked whether a proposed decision to include the question of East Timor on the Committee's agenda for its next session would be acted upon.

FERNANDO REMIREZ DE ESTENOZ BARCIELA (Cuba), the Acting Committee Chairman, replied that it would be considered at the General Assembly's next session.

Mr. NASIER (Indonesia) said he opposed the inclusion of an item on East Timor in the agenda of the Committee. His country's position should be fully reflected in the report.

The ACTNG CHAIRMAN said Indonesia's position would be reflected in the report.

[material on W. Sahara and Puerto Rico has been deleted]